

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

Learning is the process and action of acquiring knowledge from the ignorance to know condition which affects someone's behavior and knowledge ability. Wittrock in Phye stated that learning is the process of acquiring relatively permanent change in understanding, attitude, knowledge, information, ability, and skill through experience.¹ It means that learning occurs through the action done by someone then transformsto experience and turns into form of the knowledge. Having the experience and knowledge is the main purpose of learning done by the students at school. It is because both of the experience and knowledge automatically come together when the students learn a material and then apply it in practice. Both of these elements are what are expected by the teacher. The successfullarning activity or process is determined by the achievement reached by the students. It is because achievement is a measurement or the guideline of students' success in learning. If the students' achievement is high; it means that the learning process is running well, whereas if the students' achievement is low; it means that the learning process is failed.

¹ Gary D. Phye, *Handbook of Classroom Assessment: Learning, Achievement and Adjustment*, California: Academic Press, 1996. p.3.

According to Morgan in Kurniati, achievement refers to accomplishment on a test of knowledge, skill, and also personal motive.² It means that achievement in learning is what somebody can do and has done while the learning process is running. Achievement is the result that is reached by accomplishing a task or an activity given after a learning process. Officially, an achievement is symbolized with a mark whether it is an alphabet or number that is reached by the students after accomplishing a task by doing some activities with certain learning strategies that help them.

Learning achievement is the result of learning process. It can be defined as the mastery of knowledge and skill developed by subject shown by mark given by the teacher. Achievement in learning can also be raised through both cooperative learning and feedback given. It means that the combination of students' learning strategy and teacher's teaching strategy can help students to reach the achievement expected by the curriculum.

Learning English as a foreign language is important. It is the medium of a great deal of the world's knowledge, especially in such area as science and technology. In learning English, students are required to master the language skills that include speaking, listening, reading, and writing skill. This intends to make students able to widen their knowledge and insight through communication done with people all round the world.

²Kurniati, The Correlation Between Students' Attitude in Learning Writing and Their Achievement at the Second Year Students of English Education Department of Education and Teacher Training UinSuska Riau, Pekanbaru: Unpublished Thesis, 2008.

It also means that, all of the achievement in all of the language skills achieved by the students will determine their success in mastering English. That is why students learning English is targeted to achieve high achievement in order to measure their ability in mastering all of the language skills in English.

There are some important factors that affect English learning achievement such as motivation, learning strategy, learning style and language aptitude. According to Leaver et al, “language aptitude is the ability to learn foreign language which is actually innate but can be developed over the time.”³In line with Leaver, D myei in Koci stated that some authors argue that aptitude is an “umbrella-term” for a set of cognitive skills and capacities, such as working memory or phonological coding/decoding which goes beyond the skills, usually measured to determine the linguistic aptitude.⁴The components in language aptitude include phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, and language inductive ability. This clearly shows us that there is individual difference aspect that influences the result of their language learning. In line with Leaver et al, Krashen strengthens that language aptitude is the factor that encourages students to communicate by using language they learn as a

³ Betty Lou Leaver et al, *Achieving Success in Second Language Acquisition*, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 38.

⁴ Ana Koci , “The Effects of Aptitude on Language Learning.”, *The Journal*, University of Niš Faculty of Philosophy, 2010, p.234.

target language and obtain crucial input for language acquisition.⁵ It means that the students' language aptitude can promote successful language learning and help them to reach high English learning achievement. Based on this reason, it is very important to understand the relationship between language aptitude and students' achievement in learning English, so that the teachers especially the teachers of English may understand their students well and be able to expand more suitable and specific strategy of learning for the students themselves and help them to reach what is expected to be reached in terms of education system.

State Senior High School 3Pekanbaru is one of the schools in Pekanbaru that inputs English as the obligatory subject of learning. This school has taught English since the first year to accomplish the curriculum expectation and English has also been taught since the first year of English teaching period for twice a week with time duration 45 minutes. This school implies School Based Curriculum as its guidance in conducting the learning process of English. Based on *BSNP (Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan)* the purpose of studying English in Senior High School is that the students are able to achieve the informational level that is accessing the knowledge by using the language.⁶

⁵ Stephen D. Krashen, *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*, California: Pergamon Press Inc, 2002, p. 21.

⁶ Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan, Standar Isi untuk Satuan Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah: Standar Kompetensi dan Kompetensi Dasar SMA/MA, Jakarta: Unpublished, 2006, p. 126.

Language learning is a hard work. Effort is much needed in every moment that the process is running on and must be maintained over a long period of time. In teaching English, the teacher of English should have an ability and creativity to create an interesting, fun, enjoyable, and enthusiastic atmosphere in the classroom aiming to achieve successful learning. Based on the researcher's preliminary observation in State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru, it showed that the teachers of English in the school have already taught English as a subject by using some techniques, strategies, and games; it has been done to interest students and stimulates their cognition to learn English in order to get high achievement of learning English. But, some of the students still had difficulties and problems in learning English which affected their English learning achievement. This was determined by the students' ability to reach the minimum standard of passing grade (*kriteria ketuntasan minimal*) which means that the students are able to achieve and accomplish the standard competences expected by the curriculum in every learning material and ready to be evaluated and to follow the next material of learning. The standard minimum of passing grade score for English lesson in State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru is 75 point which covered all of the language skills (refers to the attached scoring rubric in Appendix 3). But, the students' especially the eleventh grade of State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru who have studied English about seven years are still encountering problem to reach the cumulative standard minimum stated

by the school. The followings are the phenomena found in the preliminary observation at State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru:

1. Some of the students did not participate while they were learning English.
2. Some of the students did not pay attention while they were learning English.
3. Some of the students did not have good verbal ability in understanding the grammatical rules.
4. Some of the students did not maximize their talent in learning English.
5. Some of the students did not have good auditory ability while they were learning listening.

Based on the phenomena stated above, it can be concluded that some of the eleventh grade students are still problematic in terms of their achievement in learning English especially for the language skills. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a research entitled:

“The Correlation Between Students’ Language Aptitude and Their Achievement in Learning English at State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru”.

B. The Problem

1. Identification of the Problem

Based on the phenomena stated in the background of the problems, it can be seen that some of the eleventh grade students of State Senior

High School 3 Pekanbaru were still encountering difficulties in learning English, especially in terms of achieving high achievement in learning English. Concerning to the students' difficulties, the problems could be investigated as follows:

- a. Some of the students did not have good inductive language ability in developing their competences in practical skill of English.
- b. Some of the students were not able to expand their grammatical sensitivity in learning English.
- c. Some of the students had low deep understanding of English material.
- d. Some of the students did not enjoy learning English.
- e. Some of the students had low language ability in learning English.
- f. Some of the students still had score under the standard minimum of English lesson.

2. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problems above, the researcher limited the problems of the research that focus on students' language aptitude and their achievement in learning English of the eleventh grade at State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru.

3. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem, the research questions are formulated in the following questions:

- a. How is the students' language aptitude of the eleventh grade at State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru?
- b. How is the students' achievement in learning English of the eleventh grade at State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru?
- c. Is there any significantly positive correlation between students' language aptitude and their achievement in learning English of the eleventh grade students at State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru?

C. Objectives and Significance of the Research

1. Objectives of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem, the objectives of the research are:

- a. To get information about students' language aptitude of the eleventh grade at State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru.
- b. To find out students' achievement in learning English of the eleventh grade at State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru.
- c. To know whether there is or not a significantly positive correlation between students' language aptitude and their achievement in learning English of the eleventh grade at State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru.

2. Significance of the Research

- a. Hopefully, these research findings are expected to be very meaningful, especially for the researcher as a novice researcher in terms of learning how to conduct a research.

- b. These research findings are expected to be valuable inputs for both teachers of English and students of the eleventh grade at State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru.
- c. These research findings are also expected to be meaningful, especially for those who are concerned with teaching and learning of English.
- d. Finally, these research findings are expected to be meaningful inputs for both practical and theoretical development of TEFL and TESOL in general.

3. Definition of the Terms

a. Correlation

Correlation is a measure of the strength of the relationship or association between two or more sets of data.⁷ In this research, correlation refers to determine the correlation between the students' language aptitude and their achievement in learning English of the eleventh grade at State Senior High School 3 Pekanbaru.

b. Language Aptitude

Aptitude for learning anything can be defined for operational purposes as "the amount of times, it takes an individual to learn the task in question." Thus, individuals typically differ not in whether they can learn a task or not learn it, but rather in the length of time

⁷ Jack C. Richards, John Platt, and Heidi Platt, *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, London: Pearson Education Limited, 1992, p.89.

it takes them to learn it or to reach a given degree of competency. This is also true of foreign language aptitude.⁸ Language aptitude refers to one's ability to learn another language. It is actually innate but it can also be developed through specific training or practice. It can be stated as the intellectual competency in acquiring other languages besides first language.

c. Learning achievement

According to Harold in Narisfa, learning is the process by which an activity originates or is changed through reacting to an encountered situation.⁹ Achievement is something done successfully with an effort and skill.¹⁰ So, in this research the learning achievement is referred to the English learning achievement which includes achievement in mastering the language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

⁸ Charles W. Stansfield, *Language Aptitude Reconsidered: ERIC Digest*, source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics Washington DC, retrieved from <http://www.google.com/LanguageAptitudeReconsidered.ERICDigest.htm>. published in 1989.

⁹ Narisfa Indra, *The Appropriateness of Students Learning Style and Their Learning Strategies in Learning English at MTSN Pangean Kuantan Singingi, Pekanbaru*: Unpublished Thesis, 2009, p.6.

¹⁰ Hornby. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p.8.